

The Toiler



William J. Fischer

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William J. Fisher

The Tiler

and Other Poems

BY

WILLIAM J. FISCHER

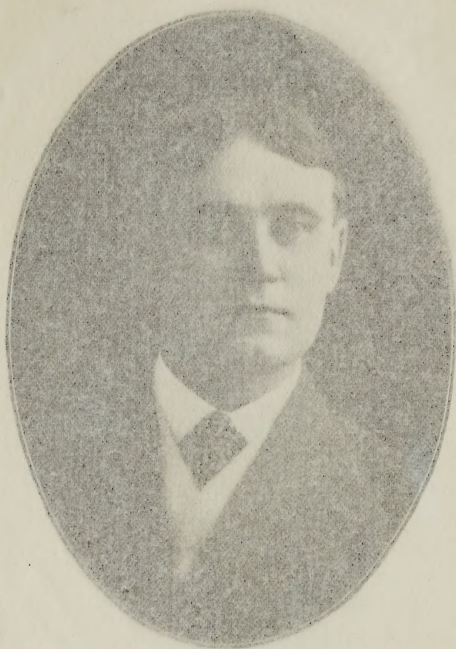
Author of

"Songs by the Wayside"



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
ALFRED M. WICKSON

TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIDGE
1907



William J. Fisher

The Tiler

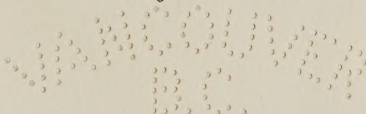
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Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada,
in the year one thousand nine hundred and seven, by
WILLIAM J. FISCHER, at the Department of Agriculture.



To

Dr. John Wishart, F.R.C.S.

and

Dr. Hugh McCallum, M.R.C.S.

5007
this book is dedicated,
with affection and gratitude,
by their friend

The Author

Waterloo, October, 1907.

79461

*"I gather my poems out of the heart of the clover,
Out of the wayside weeds, out of the meadows about me—
In gleams from the dewdrop's soul, from wings of birds
 shaken downward,
Poems the night-rain brings, shot through the beeches
 incessant;
Poems the grasshopper sings, beating his noonday labor;
The gossamer web is a rhythm, blown from the valley of
 Quiet—
A rondeau that turns on itself, folded in shimmering
 garments;
And, when the whirling flakes are tangled, at dusk, in the
 thickets,
The voice of Song outcries in the bleat of lambs on the
 hillside.*

*"All things sing to me—cry : laughter, or tears, or music.
The storm hath its rhythmical beat; the day its musical
 cadence :
Ever an ebb or a flow—a flame, or a mournful nightfall,
A rivulet, bearded with moss, to me is Theocritus singing ;
A violet, bursting in spring, thrills me with exquisite music ;
A child's voice, heard in the dusk, shakes me with infinite
 pathos,
The flash of the daybreak's sword, the march of the midnight
 planets,
The sweep of the mighty winds, the shout of the prophet-
 voiced thunder,
Restlessly throb in my soul, and shape themselves into
 measure."*

CHARLES J. O'MALLEY,



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THE TOILER.

O WHO of you, down in the street,
 Will help him bear his load?
 He struggled through the burning heat,
 Honest along life's road.
 Where roses lay he found sharp thorns
 And shadows near sunbeams,
 Black night walked with his fair, white morns,
 Despair rode on his dreams.

O who of you will speak a word
 To cheer him on his way?
 Such music! ah, he has not heard
 For many a long day.
 'Twill part the shadow clouds of grief
 And Love's bright lights will shine,
 'Twill bring his heart a swift relief
 And strengthen yours and mine.

O who of you will lend a hand
 To lift his cross of years?
 The poor old soul! he cannot stand
 The leaden weight of fears.

His hair is gray and, on his brow,
The pearls of sweat appear—
Go, friend! he needs thee sorely now,
Go, dry the bitter tear!

O give him all your love's bright gold
And bid him stop and wait!
You cannot take the gold along,
When Death stands at the gate.
"O leave behind the earthly gains!"
Will be the cry some day;
To king and slave the same remains--
A deep, cold grave for aye.

'Tis better far to love than hate,
Better to give than take;
Better act sooner than too late
For life's own precious sake.
This world is but a stopping place
And hearts are poor and sad,
Then do thy share and help to grace,
And make life's twilights glad!

THE HOMELAND.

LAST night I heard the river moan along the gray
coast line,

And a strange, o'erpow'ring feeling came to this
heart o' mine;

The *Wanderlust* was over and I longed to see again
The hills and fields of Canada, the wide and grassy
plain.

I'd roamed for years, through other lands, from
Erin to Japan,

And felt again like coming home, a wiser, sadder
man—

The gold of life was in my heart, but O, I longed
to see

The little cot down by the hills, where Youth once
played with me!

And, in a mist before mine eyes, I saw the old
home place,

The Summer wooed the stately hills, God's smile
upon his face;

The scent of clover filled the air; the birds were
on the wing;
And, in the daisy meadows, fresh, the larks did
blithely sing.
I felt the press of the cool grass upon my burning
feet,
And I heard the children's voices ring up the vil-
lage street.
The music of the old school-bell stole on the morn-
ing breeze,
And children of the long ago played 'neath the
maple trees.

Where were the hearts that throbbed with mine
in those white hours of peace?
Where were the voices that joined in our youthful
rhapsodies?
And the little barefoot children? Had they, too,
wandered far
Adown life's cold and stony way, far from their
native star?
Had they, too, felt the stress and storm of raging
battle life,
Or had they wandered peacefully far from the sound
of strife?
I wonder did their tired hearts oft break, like mine,
with love
For the green hills of Canada and the sun-kissed skies
above?



"The music of the old school-bell stole on the morning breeze,
And children of the long-ago played 'neath the maple trees."

I stole up the long, narrow lane. 'Twas quiet
everywhere
And slowly, sadly I did mount the mossy, crum-
bling stair;
I rapped, when swift an answer came from a
familiar face,
And then, rose-facèd Memory went singing round
the place.
“Oh, mother mine!” I cried in joy. “Come, let
me feel the press
Of your sweet lips, strawberry red, in all love’s
tenderness,
And let me stroke your gentle head, now white with
winter’s snow!
Oh! let us sit and glad rehearse the tales of long
ago.”

Life holds for me rich treasures now, the dream is
coming true—
I’m going home to Canada—the land of green and
blue.
Before the Dawn’s camp-fires red shall paint the
eastern sky,
I shall be speeding home again. O, how I, longing,
sigh
For breath of winds that wander swift from cool
and placid bays,
And smell of clover fields a-bloom in summer’s
glorious days,

For sound of music in the pines and sight of the
 green firs,
For press of mother's lips to mine and that strong
 love of hers!

Again I hear the river moan along the gray coast
 line,
And lo! a song of gladness fills this longing heart
 o' mine.
The *Wanderlust* is over now and I shall see again
The hills and fields of Canada, the wide and grassy
 plain.
I've roamed for years, through other lands, from
 Erin to Japan,
But now, thank God, I'm coming home, a wiser,
 sadder man—
The gold of life is in my heart, I'm coming home
 to see
The little cot down by the hills, where Youth once
 played with me.

A SPRING SONG.

THE purple violet bows her head
 Like silent nun at vesper time;
 The spider spins his silken thread
 From leaf to leaf. The cricket's rhyme
 Echoes a-down the bloss'ming day,
 And now Love treads the leafy bowers,
 And O, the peaceful, happy hours
 That Spring brings with her roundelay!
 Sweet, golden day!
 What joys awake from night's grim lair,
 What young hopes play,
 When Spring's white soul leans on a prayer!

The mist goes creeping o'er the grass,
 The shadows rest upon the hill;
 Through meadow, marsh and field glad pass
 The sunbeam-armies, silent, still—
 Millions of men, so bold and gay,
 Who, hiding on the morning breeze,
 While Earth intones her litanies,
 Invade the hours of the day.

Sweet, golden day!

Bring to me now thoughts pure as snow,
And soothe away

The little hurts of pain and woe!

The robin's madrigal sounds clear,

It floats across the frisky rills;

A sudden glory nestles here

Among the cool and throbbing hills,
And tender blossoms stoop to kiss

The parted lips of fresh leaves, young,
And O, God's grandest song is sung

By winds—trained by that voice of His!
Sweet, golden day!

My own Springtime was bright until
One late, gray May

I walked with Summer up Life's hill.

THE SONG OF TOIL.

O LISTEN to the bustle and the rustle in the street!
List to the click and clatter of ambitious, hurried
feet!

O hear the steady voices,
While fresh young life rejoices
In the raging battle heat!

O how I love the gladness and the madness of the
crowd,
That blinding, winding, finding goes a-hunting,
where the loud,
Incessant, rhythmic laughter
Fills bright hearts with the after
Peace, so free and love-endowed!

How like a mighty ocean is the motion of the tide
Of human beings, gaily, daily passing down the wide
Paths of hopes undiscovered,
Where sickly Pain oft hovered,
And where Sorrow knelt and sighed!

O heart of mine! the rattle and the battle in the
street

Fills thee with courage, proudly—loudly, while thy
forces beat

Against its casement dreary!

Ah! life it is not weary

When the toil is glad and sweet!

LOVE IS WITH ME TO THE END.

LET come what may, I know full well
 That Love is with me all the day
 To help me walk the long, long way
 And win my heart with her bright spell
 Of witchery. Across the lands
 I wander on, content and free;
 Enough that her face smiles on me—
 Enough that my heart understands.

The little breezes often twist
 Around their fingers her bright hair;
 And all the stars lean down to share
 The passion of our tender tryst.
 And, arm in arm, in endless quest,
 We wander down life's quiet street;
 Red roses spring up at our feet,
 The world gives us its brightest, best.

O, in my heart, forever ring
 The precious songs of nightingales,
 Since Love and I, across the dales,
 Go singing, dancing, welcoming

The lonely hours, that gently play
Like little, sun-kissed princes, young,
 The silent, willow trees among—
In the bright courtyard of King Day.

I am content to gladly spend
 With Life and Love these little whiles;
 Life's walked with me, ah! many miles
And Love is with me to the end.
I care not what great storms arise
 Or what great darkness fills the land,
 So long as Love gives me her hand
I am content and sympathize.

OCTOBER DAYS.

ADOWN the lane the busy wind goes hunting,
His voice is lonely in the dismal places;
The maples toss a wealth of crimson bunting
Into the air; the flowers' soft, sweet faces
Have vanished with the coming of the frost,
And up the mountains, through the dead woods
stealing,
There comes a cry, fraught with a tender feeling—
A cry as of souls lost.

The trees are sad and bend their heads in sorrow,
And cast no shadows on the brown, dry grasses;
In the chill skies are sleeping dreams of morrow,
While banker Autumn with his gold slow passes,
So miserly, across the silent lands.
And from afar the river strong is singing,
And to our hearts fresh, happy thoughts are
winging
With folded, pray'rful hands.

FROM MY STUDY-WINDOW.

I LOVE the white-capped, peaceful clouds, so still,
 That travel down the blue aisles of the day,
 Like young life's pure-souled hopes, fresh in the
 play

Of golden sunbeams, shooting 'cross the hill.
 I love the small voice of the little rill,
 So baby-like crooning a welcome gay,
 The green field near, holding the placid bay
 In her strong arms, while sings the whip-poor-will.

Spring tunes her lutes to richest melodies,
 On her pure soul the violet shelter finds—
 And O, the light footsteps of scented winds,
 That wander from the open, healthy seas!
 O first love! yea, I prize thee much and more,
 The song of glad birds through God's open door.

SONG OF NIAGARA.

O FOR the roar of the water's loud pour—

Niagara! Niagara!

O for the voice on the shelvy, far shore—

Niagara! Niagara!

From the wide demon-stretch, through thick and thin,

The wild, white horses come galloping in,

Through mystical, musical, mirthful din—

Niagara! Niagara!

O for the rush and the brush of thy waves—

Niagara! Niagara!

And the sounding hymns in thy deep-stoned caves—

Niagara! Niagara!

Thy soul lies asleep on Music's fine breast,

And, on green billows, the moonbeams pale nest.

To be near thee—it is joy, it is rest—

Niagara! Niagara!

O for the brine and the glimmer and shine—

Niagara! Niagara!

The shimmer and sheen on the long sea-line—

Niagara! Niagara!

Through flow'ry and leafy-grown, deep, deep dells,
There floats the sweet charm of silver-voiced bells,
While back comes the echo—it swells and swells—
Niagara! Niagara!

O to be free like the wild, singing sea—
Niagara! Niagara!

O to be glad as Joy's clearest toned key—
Niagara! Niagara!

The day's dim longings float down with the tide,
And, on the wild waves, a thousand Hopes ride,
My heart speeds after, but what will it bide,
Niagara? Niagara?

Down in men's souls, through the thick, spreading
shoals—

Niagaras! Niagaras!

A strong, mighty tide flows and ebbs and rolls—
Niagara! Niagara!

There are restless hearts like the wild sea waves,
And the briny, salt tear the eye's shore laves,
And some sad, poor lives—they are cold, cold
caves—

Niagaras! Niagaras!

THE NEWBORN.

WHITE lamb, from a great Father's mighty fold,
White star upon the year's stained, darkened blue,
White lily 'mid life's rosemary and rue—
White child, the sweetest treasure in love's gold!
Ah, little soul! you do not know the cold
Or fever of life's struggle; the light dew
Lies fresh upon your flowered face, and, through
Your silken tresses, sunbeams wade. Behold!

In your young heart are sleeping dreams, grown
wise;
On your red lips the flush of newborn day
And, in your soul, the peace, too deep for name,
Clear mirrored in the sky-blue of your eyes,
By cheerful Hope so richly starred. O may
God take you back as pure, child, as you came!

AT DAYBREAK.

IN the blue sky one little star
And in my soul a hope so young,
And white and star-like, trembling still,
By God upon my life-string hung.

IN the high tree a cheerful bird
And in mine ear a burst of song,
To bring me joy and soft-eyed peace,
And make my pulses beat more strong.

ON the far hills a crimson shines,
And in my heart a dawn of light—
To-day Love's roses will be red,
To-day my hours will be bright.

IN the green grass the sunbeams rest,
To warm the aching earth's rich blood;
And, on my lips, the kind words wait
To do some poor heart lasting good.

THE OLD PIANO.

It stands within a shadowy recess
And sad-eyed Silence holds her vigil there,
Through the long hours, odorous with pray'r,
That seem to raise their fingers pale to bless
The thousand thoughts around, that glad caress
The little mem'ries kneeling everywhere;
And, in the blind musician's wooden chair,
The moonbeams sleep, grown old with weariness.

Dear old piano, in halcyon days,
Thou hadst full many loves—a stately king
Touched thy white soul to sound; his fair queen,
young,
Sang the prince-babe to sleep with merry lays.
But now thy heart is with the poor—the sting
Of the blind beggar's touch, his songs unsung.

SONG AT MIDNIGHT.

THE clock breathes faintly on the stairs,
I hear the tramp of busy hours,
And dreams pass by, silent and slow,
In Love's warm April show'rs.
They twine for me a shining wreath—
Rosemary and red, red roses,
While, in the curtained door-way wide,
A shadow mutely poses.

Come, Memory! I know thy face
And, like a sea, thy soulful eyes
Reflect the hopes, as ships gone down,
Amid a storm of sighs.
Thou art a welcome messenger;
Come, keep thou vigil with the stars
And moon, that smile benignant
Between the window-bars!

Let's out into the open space,
Sweet spirit in thy silky gown!
And I will walk the Past with thee,
The good ways up and down—

The spreading, green fields, clover-blown,
The distant paths, outstretching far
To where they meet the twilight skies
Of blue and cinnabar!

'Tis good to feel thy warm, strong hand
Closed fastly in mine very own;
'Tis good to hear thy honest voice
In soft, sad undertone.
And O the press of thy cool lips,
So berry-sweet and red as wine!
Those lips, as in the summer days,
Pressed close and long to mine.

I'm glad you came, gray Memory,
To spend with me such afterwhiles;
The night is o'er, and I have walked
With thee, ah! miles and miles.
The clock breathes faintly on the stairs,
I hear the tramp of waiting hours—
If go thou must, O Memory,
Leave me the faded flow'rs!

THE POET OF THE HABITANT.

(Dr. William Henry Drummond—Died April 6, 1907.)

THE singer's voice is hushed for evermore,
 Glad, bird-like voice, that sang of humble things—
 Of birds and flow'rs and children—whisperings
 Of life, that stole through Quebec's open door.
 His strong, clear voice grew louder more and more;
 Whole nations loved him. The bright, golden
 strings
 Of his sweet lyre now wait his touch, while kings
 Of thought sad turn his living pages o'er.

His was the poet's soul, white as the morn,
 That moves across Lac Grenier's bosom wide.
 He sang of home and hope and that strong tide
 Of lasting love, which should men's hearts adorn—
 In his song-garden God was at his side,
 No wonder then his roses had no thorn.

AUTUMN RAIN.

HEAR the music in the murmur of the rain,
 And the touch of little fingers on the pane!
 There are shadows on the mountain,
 Deep within me there's a fountain
 Of wild, welling, anxious thoughts that rise in vain.
 O the constant, cheerful chatter of the rain!
 Cease, poor heart of mine! Ah, pray do not complain!
 There are wet days yet before thee,
 Do not fret! Forget the chilly
 Feel of hurts in life's wide, open, green domain!

There are words that fall upon our hearts like rain,
 Crowding out sunshines in that fair, little Spain,
 Where they rise, Hope's glowing towers,
 And where bloom Joy's fragrant flowers,
 In the land, upon whose bosom Love has lain.
 But each heart must feel the sting of such a rain,
 Else this life would be all pleasure and no pain.
 We must take the sweet with bitter,
 God ne'er made Life a rose-litter.
 There are weeds and they are thickest in life's lane.

There are tears that fall upon our cheeks like rain.
They are heavy and they come now and again
 From the ocean shores of sorrow,
 And no softness do they borrow
From the hardened, salty rocks of bitter Pain
Over which they flow. This vast and throbbing main
Each one of us here has sailed, ah! not in vain.
 But God gives the tears—so take them,
 For He makes not hearts to break them!
But into each life sometime must come the rain.

THE OLD LOVE.

'Tis in vain we appeal to the old love,
Asleep in her shroud of the snows;
She was good, she was true, she was hopeful—
Time's bridal, white, beautiful rose.
Then away with the pain and the anguish
Of parting, that ev'ry heart knows.

Let us then, for the sake of the old love,
Gaze long in those passion-warm eyes;
They are tearful and know not the rapture
Of anxious, bright, amethyst skies
That now lie, in the lap of the morning,
To greet the sad world's precious prize.

O poor heart! We are done with the old love,
And, on the fresh wind's mighty breath,
Comes a whisper of life, that is rosy,
And now a fond joy lingereth—
She has passed, through the portals of midnight,
From out the cold shadows of death.

Then rejoice! let us welcome the new love—
The virginal New Year, so fair—
The bright spirit of joy and contentment,
That thrills the glad world everywhere,
And, sweet, lures our thoughts, far down the future,
On her lips, God's message and prayer!

SLANDER.

(After Bürger.)

WHEN Slander's tongue pierces thine heart,
Take comfort in this saying trite—
“It's ne'er the bad and rotting fruit
That gives the wasp her appetite!”

THE GIFT OF LIFE.

'Tis sweet to live, if living means to love
All things of beauty in this wide world, dear—
Nature's joy-song, her melodies sincere,
The shepherd-wind, that herds cloud-sheep above,
The girlish, blushing rose a-bloom. Enough
For me, the voices of the children here—
Their playground is to Heaven very near,
And Love to them is a bright, cooing dove.

'Tis sweet to live and sweet it is to feel
The thrill of rapture, when the old day kneels
Upon the green, wet grass and soft, clear peals
Of childish prayer fast die away and steal
Close to God's heart. E'en this great Life conceals
Her anguish, when child-lips to Him appeal.

PANSIES FOR THOUGHTS.

PANSIES for thoughts! Ah, in their bed they lie,
 So still and free, beneath the open sky—
 Yellow and purple, crimson, velvet-white,
 In their dim eyes, the glory of rich night.

Pansies for thoughts! And how the old thought
 burns
 Within my soul; star unto star returns
 A smile. To me, the past brings happiness;
 My lips are silent, yet my fingers bless.

The yellow pansies bring me thoughts of dawn,
 Bright-facèd dreams, a-striding 'cross the lawn;
 The eastern daybreaks, and the song of birds,
 The young Hopes passing down Life's lane in herds.

And, from the purple, thoughts of dark night
 throng—
 The little sorrows that made light hearts strong;
 The starless skies—the tears—the bitterness,
 The painful longings, life's wild storm and stress.

The crimson pansies bring back hours of rest—
The quiet twilights with their sleepers blest;
The trooping pleasures, that filled in dull days,
The ruddy faces on life's merry ways.

The pansies white! Ah, gladly they still voice
The good deeds, answ'ring faithful duty's choice;
Their humble white hands, crossed in meek accord,
Their voices praising their great master, lord.

THE GARDEN AND THE CHILD.

I WALKED along the well-known trodden ways
Of the bright garden of those early years.
The flow'rs were dead; there were no dewy tears
Upon their shrunken faces. The sun's rays
Made golden all the dreary land, and plays
Of music floated 'cross the empty meres.
The winds sang out their hearts' deep, hidden
fears.
O how I longed to clasp those early Mays!

There came a little child who took my hand.
"The flow'rs are gone," he said, "but lingers yet
The perfume of a Memory." And then
He crept away. "Come back!" I cried. The land
Stole in between. "No! no! Farewell—forget!
I am thy Youth! Go thou and live with men!"

SONG OF CARE.

O to be free like the birds in the air!
 'Tis a boon my simple heart craves,
 With lightsome, glad wing to brush away Care,
 Who counts men her dutiful slaves.
 But no! she's a maiden with beauty set,
 And I'd miss the touch of her hand,
 So come, gentle Care! We are friends well met,
 Let's sow well in Love's fruitful land!

O to be glad like the birds in the trees,
 With never a pain or a sigh,
 To toil patiently like satisfied bees
 And build Love a mansion on high!
 But what's a bright smile without a sad tear?
 A very plain fabric of Life.
 We need tangled threads—the white and the black—
 At the looms of Pleasure and Strife.

THE DOCTOR.

He stands, 'twixt life and death, through busy cares,
An angel, in the eyes of toiling Pain:
Strong men look up at him through tearful rain,
Strong women sound their noblest, purest pray'rs
Into his ears; sick children, weak, in pairs,
Rest in his Love's bright bed; Sorrow has lain
Therein and Pity wept. Now and again
God brings him soul-strength up life's winding stairs.

A worker in the low, degraded street,
He sees the shadow with the shining light
And touches black souls as the pure priest can;
He sees Pain, should'ring her old cross so sweet,
And, through the dawn, the live-long day and
night,
He feels the pulse of God in ev'ry man.

SPRING BIRDS.

SING to me! wing to me, young morning birds!

The soul of the bright springtime is white,
With blossoms a plenty, driven in herds
By the cool shepherd-winds of the night.

Sing to me! bring to me glad thoughts adrift,
Walking the wide fields of the hours!

O good to see is the young Day's love-gift—
Acres of green grass and rich flow'rs.

Sing to me, fling to me your liquid notes,
That gladden my little heart weary;

O come! Music on, sweet, silver, bird-throats,
God wants not the earth to be dreary!

TO A STREET ARAB.

My heart has but an open door,
Enter, pale child, and be my guest!
Whatever is, it seemeth best,
And thou shalt starve and weep no more.

Weary the frost wind calls afar,
Blacker and colder the night grows,
Darkens thy life. Its heaven knows
No sun, no moon or shining star.

Frugal the fare for thee I spread,
No brilliant feast of royalty,
But warmest welcome waits for thee,
And thy small heart to mine I'll wed.

Flowers will bloom and birds will sing
Within my heart's bright narrow room,
Where Love sits daily at her loom
And weaves on without murmuring.

Ah, little one! for thee a bird
Will music through the busy day,
And, when thou'rt weary of all play,
I'll sing thee lullabies unheard.

My heart has but an open door,
God holds the key unto the last,
Love sees the latch is never fast—
She mothers all the needy poor.

THE HEART OF THE WOODS.

THE wild heart of the woods—therein is rest.
 Above me sways a sky of whisp'ring green,
 Around me far the silent shadows lean
 And listen to tree-music; in their nest
 The fond birds mother their young brood so blest;
 The purling brooks quench Summer's thirst; the
 sheen
 And shimmer on the changing sylvan scene
 Is glorious to me, glad nature's guest.

A thousand happy mem'ries slumber here
 Beneath these oaks; a thousand happy hopes
 Flutter upon the bending leaves in fear,
 And O the press of the cool grass! The slopes
 Of peace stretch wide before mine vision clear,
 And slowly God's white finger heaven opes.

A LOVE SONG.

WHEN the morning gaily flings her gray, little
shadowings,

And the sunbeams dance mazurkas on the lea,
Could I capture all the rapture of the river's mur-
murings,

Ah, my sweet! I'd sing the pretty song for thee.

When the tired afternoon, weary, drifts into a
swoon,

And the hours pass among the flow'rs to play,
I could bless thee and caress thee, till the busy,
crescent moon

Lights her candles in the heav'ns' lonely way.

And when ev'ning's colors flush, and her soothing,
gentle hush

Falls upon us, and the moments cradled lie,
I could whisper and could lisp: "Her glowing
cheek's warm, rosy blush

Is far richer than the crimson in the sky."

But when night her form unveils, in green meadows,
fields and dales,

Ah, 'tis then, pure angel, thou art at my side,
With star-dreamings and light-gleamings to cheer
me, when courage fails,

In the sky-blue of your eyes, where hopes abide.

O my love! My cooing dove! Had we wings, we
two could rove

Through the land, in sun, moonshine or stormy
weather;

Morns eternal yet will break, fairer afternoons
will wake,

Nights will throb for thy dear sake—

O my sweet in life! we'll share pure love together!

SONG OF STRENGTH.

Be strong—

Be not afraid, for sun and moon and star
 Lean down from heaven where the heart's hopes are.
 It is their light that makes shadows appear;
 How foolish then to waste the precious tear!
 Be strong,
 For gentle peace will come at even-song,
 When little heartaches bring their joy along!

Be strong!

It matters not how long the gloomy way,
 How dark the night that calls loud for the day,
 For, far beyond the morning's crimson skies,
 The little road winds on and glad replies—
 "Be strong,
 And I will lead you safe through endless quest,
 I led thy Master to His land of rest."

Be strong!

This selfsame stony path we all must tread,
 And all must fight and taste life's crust of bread;
 Roses there'll be for some, for others rue;

God dropped them on the way for me and you.
Be strong,
And consecrate with love life's holy hours
And let them blossom into snow-white flow'rs!

Be strong!
Shoulder the trials of thy busy day!
Fight on! Push on manly into the fray,
And fight the fight that God means you to fight,
And set thy foot upon the path of right!
Be strong,
And gentle peace will come at even-song!
Be strong, poor heart of man, be strong—be strong!

THE DAY'S END.

WHEN the long day is done, and all its hours
 Have folded their small book of cares and sighs,
 I love to sit in a peace-path of flowers
 And watch the yellow moon swim through the
 skies.
 And sweetly all the bright stars sing together,
 And O my heart is glad, yes glad, once more,
 For often, O, in sunny, stormy weather,
 I hear a sob, growing within its door.

The dewy night-winds with their spirit fingers
 Smooth out the little worries of the day;
 And, in the street, the breeze's breath still lingers
 To cool the burning thoughts that long held sway.
 And shadows wait so silently and listen
 To the grand hymn that sweeps up from the seas;
 And, on the vines, the shy, young moonbeams glisten,
 While my glad soul exults in ecstasies.

For, in the western skies, are richly blended

All the bright tints that creep into life's whole,
Ere its last parting moment sweet is ended,

While strong, wide tides of passion onward roll—
I see the yellow of Life's morning's sunrise,

The bright, bright blue of the high afternoon,
The twilight's crimson and the gray of even—

The black of night that comes, ah me, too soon.

LOVE AND LIFE.

O LIFT your voice and let it ring!
The world's alive. 'Tis always Spring,
When hearts are light and eyes are dry
And the gray hours pass quickly by.
For Love's an angel, trusty, kind,
Her voice is heard on ev'ry wind;
She sails the skies on pinions blest,
Upon her endless, loyal quest.
To the heart's door, in joy, she comes
And, with her fingers, lo! she drums
Her way into the very room
Where Life sits weaving at her loom,
Wearing the glad, sweet hours away,
Toiling and fretting all the day,
Thinking of battles never won,
Longing for skies, where warmer sun
Might bring back twilights redder still
Than those which break above Hope's hill.
And in that dull and narrow cell,
Whose cloistered walls no secrets tell,
Love and Life sit through fragrant Mays,
Their thoughts adrift on various ways.

Love strings full swift red roses bright,
And Life gathers the thorns at night.

Yet, in her garden of delight,
Life never sees the shadow's blur,
Till jealous Death, in awful might,
Slays Love—her trusty *gardener*.

A PASTEL—TWILIGHT.

BEYOND the purple hills afar,
Upon her throne of crimson sweet,
She sits, bright-eyed; bold courtiers are
The shadows gray that kiss her feet.

White, passing clouds glad build for her
A marble palace not of earth;
And now she waits her worshipper—
The lordly Moon of eastern birth.

HEIM-LIED.

HAD I the light wings of yon chirping bird,
I'd fly for miles through the thick ether-space,
To rest my lonely heart in that bright place,
Where, first, mine ears life's melodies had heard,
And dream gray dreams of peace and hope deferred,
And see again my childhood's pure, white face,
Glowing with promise, clothed in angel-grace,
Reviewing glad the pictures Time has blurred.

Sweet home, wherein the first days of my Spring
Were spent, to-night I long for banished boons—
The morns that blossomed forth rich afternoons!
Ah! had I wings, I'd break the chains that cling
About dull care and fly, 'neath other moons,
Into thy arms, belovèd—still thy king.

A CHRISTMAS IDYL.

I.

THE starlight bright steals into my bare room,
Ah! would that it might still this heart, so old—
This heart, that knows and feels the biting cold
Of loneliness! Would that its bitter gloom
Might sunshine forth the fairest bud or bloom
Of hope, that I might see his precious mould
Before mine eyes grow dim! The years have rolled
Too slowly on, since that black night of doom.

A laughing child, I held him to my breast
And saw him flower there before mine eyes,
But O too brief was this bright Paradise!
With all a mother's love, his hands I pressed.
The night he left my heart, my house forlorn,
The flower sweet gave way—I felt the thorn.

II.

And, in my old chair, here I sit alone,
This happy night of nights, to all most dear,
And now the sexton rings forth Christmas cheer
From out the belfry of yon church of stone.

For me no gladsome music will atone—

My heart still threnodies its tones of fear.

My poor, poor child! Alas! O'er snowy mere,
The wind, like some sad mother, maketh moan.

Mary, most kind, who on this peaceful night

Watched by a crib of straw an only Child,

Take my poor boy to thy heart, undefiled!

He needs thee now. Let the winged angels, bright,

Unbar the prison door—that he may see

The lights of Christmas burning fresh and free!

IN THE SUMMER FIELDS.

ACROSS the summer fields I go,
The world is bright and life's a song,
Strung up of tender melodies,
By mild winds blown along.
The fields are wet with Nature's tears,
And the sad night has wandered far,
Beyond the hills and quiet skies
Of blue and cinnabar.
But, high above, the sun shines clear,
The grass is green and flow'rs are bright.
Come, friends, into the fields, and see
The miracle of light!

O weary brothers, come with me
And quit the noisy city street!
Come, feel the press of the wet grass
Upon your burning feet!
Leave all your petty trials behind
And wash your heart free from all care!
The very God is in the fields
Upon the wings of air,

And voice of Summer lingers here
Amongst the pleasant, whisp'ring trees,
Which roof Earth's cheerful, breathing rooms
And house the song of bees.

The brooks with sounds are musical
For tired souls with trouble sore;
Hear, brother, not the threnodies
Within thy own heart's door,
When life is glad the old day through
Within these cool and throbbing fields!
Come out into the open—come—
Where young Love ever shields
Thee from all stress and press of strife!
Here, in this place of rest and song,
A very Heaven waits for thee,
Wherein gay Hopes glad throng.

A CANADIAN AUTUMN.

THE wild geese wing their flight across the sky,
 Filled well with brooding clouds, so dull and gray;
 A sullen sadness shades the face of day,
 And, mirrored in the brook, the shadows lie.
 The murm'ring, forest pines and the wild cry
 Of some poor bird—the thirsty bloodhound's
 prey—
 Make Nature lonely, though her bright display
 Of color dazzles man's æsthetic eye.

The maple trees in crimson, yellow, red,
 The asters and the princely golden-rod,
 The clust'ring vines, near by the cottage door,
 The dying willow, bending her proud head—
 All, all so meekly, to the twilight nod
 And, lo! the woodman's axe resounds no more.



"The wild geese wing their flight across the sky,
Filled well with brooding clouds so dull and gray ;
A sullen sadness shades the face of day,
And, mirrored in the brook, the shadows lie."

A LYRIC OF THE WOODS.

O woods, with your branches of maple so green,
Your flecks of blue sky, peeping soft in between—
I love your glad shades and your em'rald-green
light;
They bring to my eyes such rich feasts of delight.

The anemone, from its leafy, green bed,
Greets me in the twilight and bows her young
head—
O sad was the morning and sadder the day,
When, flower, I twined thee in fresh garland, gay!

The fern on the uplands was wet with the dew,
The smiles of the morning came swift stealing
through,
When first I espied thee, bright, cheerful and brave,
And twined thee in garland to crown his fresh
grave.

E'en now his fond footsteps steal o'er the wet grass,
And there, in the twilight, his spirit doth pass;
How I long for the times when, children, we played,
While here I stand waiting for footsteps long
strayed!

O woods, give me back the glad smiles and the tears,
The ruby-kissed cheeks of those tender, short
years,
O give back the hours and pleasure's warm glow,
That filled to o'erflowing those joys long ago!

O woods, with your wealth of high maples and
green,
Your flecks of blue sky peeping soft in between,
Your em'rald-hued halls hold a picture of years—
The dreams of a youth, sweetly framed in love's
tears.

DARLING OF THE GRAY HAIR.

I.

THE hours walk past, and, in the moonlight, here,
 I sit and dream, and O, God knows my dreams!
 That little room, filled with bright childhood's
 gleams,
 Brings back this night a smile instead of tear.

At the closed door, I pause and listen long
 For stir of music in the silence vast,
 And now my heart reclaims the gentle past—
 O mother, sing for me the even-song!

I come to thee from the wild, city streets,
 From the hot fields of stirring, bitter strife,
 Whereon is moulded each man's anxious life
 By vict'ries white and glaring, red defeats.

O mother, sing to me the songs of gold,
 The lullabies that soothed my heart in spring!
 E'en now my thoughts a-hundred swiftly wing
 Across the dawns and noons and twilights old.

I hear the patter of two little feet
And see the winding path with sun ablaze—
O to live o'er again those gladsome days
And walk with thee adown Love's quiet street!

II.

I called in vain for sound of lullabies,
When opened wide the door of the small room.
"Ah, mother mine! come, put away the loom
And let me read Love's message in thy eyes!"

"Come, speak to me, darling of the gray hair,
And let me catch the music of thy voice!
E'en now it bids this lonely heart rejoice
And sounds within like nun's pure, whispered
 pray'r."

"How good to feel the press of thy warm hand,
O mother mine! here at thy feet I kneel,
Thy child. O blessèd moment, ne'er reveal
The joy that God gives me to understand!"

AUTUMN IN THE MUSKOKA WOODS.

I WALK among the graves of days now dead—
 The warm, bright days that felt the kiss of Spring,
 The pleasant days that long did gladly cling
 To Summer's breast, like young babes comforted.
 But here is peace—here 'neath this sky of red
 And crimson, golden leaves the sunbeams fling
 Shy glances, while afar the brooklets sing
 To cheer the black crows, cawing overhead.

A touch of myst'ry softens Nature's rune.
 O how I love the quiet of these woods,
 Her sweet, soul-satisfying solitudes,
 Where winds pass slow and hush their gentle croon!
 Here bitter thought of struggle ne'er intrudes;
 Here God befriends me the whole afternoon.

THE SINGER OF SONGS.

THE Singer of songs sang in the street, and the
people passed him by;

He sang of home and hope and love, the flow'rs and
fields and sky.

In the after years his songs were sung, when Fame
blessed with gold him, dead—

Yet, while he lived, the poet went a-begging for his
bread.

A SONG IN SUMMER.

THERE is music in the whisper of the lisp-
ing, sum-
mer breeze,

There is music in the river as it flows;
There are songs unsung that rustle through the
blossom-frosted trees,

When pale twilight gleams their crimson tints
disclose.

There is music in the buzzing of the little busy bee
As he fills with love the lily's willing ears;
And it tunes her heart to gladness, white and throb-
bing in its glee,

As he wipes her face and dries her dewy tears.

There is music in the marshes when the bobolinks
awake

And the daylight floats upon its sunny wings,
When their mellow peals so joyous wake the cricket
on the brake,

And full soft forthwith their matin gladly rings.

There is music full of feeling in the sighing of a
tree,

Such a minor tone of sorrow or of woe;
And, athwart our heart-strings tender, sadly floats a
threnody,

From out the dead-and-buried long ago.

There is music full of fury in the hissing of the
waves,

When their frantic faces foam upon the shore;
And there's music in the woodland green, that
guards the silent graves,

Where the waters, rushing, spume and sigh and
roar.

There is music in the echo of a distant waterfall,
There are songs unwritten floating through the
air,

And field, forest, fen and mountain hear the sum-
mer's cheery call—

There is music, music, music everywhere.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Do you remember those cool, summer days,
When we were little children, young and free
As birds, filling short hours with melody
And meeting Love upon a thousand ways?
God looked upon us in our simple plays,
Our voices strung to high, clear notes of glee,
Our hearts a-tune to song. O would that we
Might wander through the old, green, fragrant
Mays!

The hill still stands beside the lonely sea
Where we, fond playmates, chased the angry
waves;
And oft I hear, above the din of strife,
The waters' cry: "O bring them back to me,
The two small children! Are they in their graves?
I long to clasp each precious, little life."

IN OLD QUEBEC.

I.

THE moon's pale face is on the lake,
The dew is on the trees;
The sparrows gray have gone to rest,
Where gently sighs the breeze.
The violet beneath the vine
Holds tear-drops in its eyes;
I wonder does it miss the smile
Of crimson-tinted skies.
Yet, peaceful, in the realms above,
From out the azure blue,
The stars, God's angels white, peep out
To watch the rising dew.
With what a crown of jewels rare
He decks the silent night—
The sky, the myriad stars a gleam,
The moon's bright, golden light!
The shadows of the maple trees
Are kissing the green grass;
Between them and the whisp'ring leaves,
My love, I see thee pass.

They dance about the distant fields,
Like fairies of the night,
Unto the rippling lake below
They dash with all their might.
And, o'er the old, gray garden-wall,
They leap in their glad prance;
And, far into the village green,
They hold their midnight dance.

II.

The village with its old thatched roofs
Lies sleeping 'neath the moon;
The apple trees are frosted o'er
With blossoms, dew-aswoon;
And softly, on the ev'ning wind,
The breath of flowers sweet
Is gently wafted, o'er the lake,
And fills the village street.
And all that breaks the quiet deep
Are fishes in their play—
A little splash and splutter mild
And noises die away.
'Twas but at sunset that yon street
Did thrill with life and play—
Bertille, the milkmaid, sang her song
In fields across the way.
And soon the lowing herds came home,
Fresh from the dewy grass;

Bateese, the plough-boy, urged them on ;

Bertille, she saw him pass.

Beneath a hat of straw there beamed

A face, sunburnt and red,

And, when the Angelus pealed forth,

In pray'r he bowed his head.

On bended knee he asked his God

To bless Bertille Lachance.

"I love Bateese," Bertille whisper'd :

"Bateese, king of the dance."

COMPENSATION.

WHAT care I though misfortune's clouds
Should darken life's bright way,
I know again, in those same skies,
Sun, moon and stars will play.

When sun and moon behind the hills
The shadow-clouds glad wait,
In heaven's blue and open fields,
In flocks, stars congregate.

IN MIDWINTER.

I COULD not bear the storm of winter's snow,
Did I not feel that some way on the Spring
Was waiting for the call, that March-winds bring
In times, when thaws swell up the river's flow.
There is a comfort, these cold days, to know
That very soon returning birds will wing
Across the lands, and violets will cling
To mother Earth, like children, loath to go.

But what care I for Spring, when thou art near!
From thy sweet throat comes nightingale's glad
song;
And, in thy cheek's bright garden, roses throng
In red, and, though thy eye's fast falling tear
Brings April to the heart, what's nature's year
To the eternal springs you walk among?

HEART SONG.

THOUGH dark be the clouds in the heavens,
 Cheer up, little heart! do not sigh,
 For, in the bright lap of the morning,
 The angels of hope softly lie,
 Awaiting the beckoning fingers
 Of sunbeams, hid high in the sky!

Cheer up! Life's promiscuous failing
 Some little good oft-times will bring,
 That awakes, in the soul of suff'ring,
 Glad, spirit-like thoughts, that still cling
 To the dead years' old, crumbling pillars,
 In Mem'ry's hall—where Love is king.

Cheer up, little heart! in thy yearning
 There's something sweet, yet unexpressed;
 Though day brings the long, bitter battle,

The night brings pure hours of rest.
Your soul, fasten, then, on the striving,
For God points the way! It is best.

'Tis best, little heart! for some morrow
Will soothe the deep pangs of to-day,
And, for the regret of November,
Will come the glad joy of a May—
Then, into the fray of the battle,
For God, little heart, points the way!

UNDER THE STARS.

THE glad, white stars are in the skies
And, high above, the yellow moon,
And now I see, in thy dear eyes,
The love-light pure at noon.
The roses red are in my hand,
Fresh pillowed in their leaves so meek—
And love now makes me understand
The softness of thy cheek.

The breezes, singing down the vale,
Make wistful night-time clear rejoice,
And now I hear, in love's bright tale,
The music of thy voice.
The fiery stars their red light bring
To moments, pure with sanctity,
And, in my soul, full gladly ring
Love's madrigals of thee.

And stars and moon and sky above
And fragrant roses leaning near—
All tell me loud, my little love,
That thou art near, my dear.

NIGHT SOWS HER SKY-FIELD.

NIGHT sows her sky-field with bright stars above—
 White daisies all upon a ground of blue;
 The pale, clad moonbeams wander gaily through,
 Like little princes, longing for their love.
 And minstrel breezes creep glad from the cove,
 Their harps a-tune to song. In earth's dim pew,
 The beggar-shadows kneel, and not a few
 Heed yon sweet cooing of a turtle-dove.

O to be lonely in this wide, grand world
 Is bitterness! Though scorn brings us defeat,
 Come feel the kinship, friendship Nature gives
 In meadow, forest, everywhere unfurled
 Rich treasures! This heart-hunger, this fierce heat
 Burns out too soon the candles of bright lives.

A SONG OF DROWSY TOWN.

SWEET! sweet! hear the swift feet,
 The Spirits are calling from Drowsy town;
 Voices sing loud to thee,
 Clear bells ring out to thee,
 Fairies bring shout to thee,
 Over the lonely hills, silent and brown,
 Ah! little angel mine!
 Sail thro' the dancing Rhine,
 In thy dream-fashioned, light ship up and down!
 Oh, to set sail with thee!
 Kisses I'll mail to thee,
 For thousands are drifting to Drowsy town.
 So rest! rest! peace, tired heart,
 The night breaks too soon into morning!

Love! love! fair clouds above,
 All are aflame with bright crimson and gold:
 Old day is dead to us,
 Now overhead to us,
 Night wings are spread to us,
 Waiting to bear away strong cares, grown old.

Go, pretty baby, wise,

Close thy blue, weary eyes,

While to thy bright life the hours young hold!

Poppies fresh bloom for thee,

Oh, there is room for thee,

In Sleep's fine city, all silver and gold.

So rest! rest! peace, tired heart,

The night breaks too soon into morning!

Sleep! sleep! like tired sheep,

Gray clouds so slowly drift down the wide road.

Oh, from the sky to thee,

Baby stars cry to thee,

Winds lullaby to thee,

While the dark shadows rest their heavy load.

Dearie, the angels bright,

Peep through the curtained night,

Crooning so lustily; in their abode

They have a space for thee;

God has a place for thee,

Somewhere along this life's rosy-decked road,

So rest! rest! peace, tired heart,

The night breaks too soon into morning!

JUNE MORNINGS.

THE gray mist lies upon the purple hills;
My soul and I stand in the trembling grass.
The river shines a sheet of molten glass;
And bobolink full gaily, gladly trills
In flow'ring meadows; and fresh, busy rills
Sing the Asperges to June's opening Mass,
While sun-priest and his sunbeam-servers pass
Through rosy aisles, and all the young day thrills.

Walk out into the open, O my soul!
The very air is charged with sanctities
And, in some dim cell, sheltered by the trees,
Kneel down and pray, while solitudes console!
The very God is resting on the breeze
To solve, O soul! life's warped, dim mysteries.

SONG OF THE PRAIRIE WIND.

I'VE come from the lonely land of sleep, where
rivers of Quiet flow,
And, through the wide earth, with glad song of
mirth, a wand'rer lone, I go;
The song of the sea is in my heart, and the stars
they bid me stay
To sing songs of cheer, in the moonshine clear, and
join them in their play.

I carry a thousand perfumes in the mesh of my
flowing hair—
Violet, rose and heliotrope I scent the dewy night
air;
I love the press of the silent grass as onward I hurry,
quick,
A whisper of love upon my lips for the shadows
kneeling thick.

And, as I go through this land of woe, I stop at
many a door
And list for the sound of a cheery voice, whether
of rich or poor;
But never a voice do I hear, alas! that brings joy
gratefully.
The weary old world sleeps on, dear heart, and
night is alone with me.

I wake the birds in their silent nests, high up in
the willow trees,
And, through the clover fields, fresh, I wade right
up to my very knees;
The moon comes out of heaven's closed door and
sweeps the gray clouds away,
And, bold lovers true—the moon and I, we woo the
hours in play.

And, before young Day stirs in his tent and flings
far his arrows bright,
I wander to the graveyard green, in the living
glorious night;
And there, adown the paved, grassy, wide aisles, I
pass with footsteps slow—
O how I'd love to taste the joy that earth's sleep-
ing, dead children know!

I read each precious name, as I pass by each sculptured, marble stone,

And I strew rose-petals o'er each grave, by my own breath gently blown;

And, on my knees, I mumble prayers for the good souls of those who wait.

O little white city! I love you best, for God stands at your gate.

A FAREWELL.

CHILDREN together through life's younger days,
Sharing each other's sorrow, joy and pain,
To-day as men, amid our young hopes slain,
We stand at the sad ending of life's ways.
And all the rosy moments of warm Mays,
You brought me in those hours, wet with rain,
Flower above the low weeds, that complain
In the gray garden of our yesterdays.

Earth holds no sweeter name than thine of friends,
I'll ne'er forget what thou hast been to me.
From out my sky, the brightest lights now die,
But in another one white star ascends
Before God's vision—thy pure soul, now free.
Good-bye, old friend! good-bye—good-bye—
good-bye!

HEARTSICK.

His mellow notes the soft wind plays
Through the hot, busy afternoon
And old thoughts pass away too soon
From the bright, early days—

Those early days, alight with sun
And moon and star's bright coloring;
Those days, when the wild heart of Spring
Housed and loved everyone.

Poor children of the early days!
Could we but walk the lanes grown wide
And be again heart-satisfied
In nigh a thousand ways!

The noise of battle dulls our ears,
The heat of struggle blinds our eyes;
We look into the farther skies
Only to feel hot tears.

But Life holds forth rich legacies—
The golden thoughts no one dare take,
They are our own. For their sweet sake
Throb glowing sympathies—

The thoughts that travel lanes grown wild
Unto the Past's glad beckoning.
O God! rather than royal king
Make me again—a child!

THE YOUNG MOTHER.

THAT little crib is all the world to her—
The world of Love, wherein her Baby-King
Reigns peaceful on through golden, gladsome
Spring,
While her heart kneels, in spirit, worshipper.
Her busy life knows not the shadow's blur—
All, all is bright and sunbeams gladly cling
To her white thoughts, that go meandering
On pleasant ways with harp and dulcimer.

O little one, so loving and so warm!
In thy dear eyes a thousand, sweet delights,
Thy mother watches, prays through endless nights
That angels keep thee ever from all harm!
A singing bird, in the wide, open wood,
She tastes the bitter-sweet of Motherhood.



"That little crib is all the world to her—
The world of Love, wherein her Baby-king
Reigns peaceful on through golden, gladsome Spring,
While her heart kneels, in spirit, worshipper."

A SAINT.

WHERE others plucked bright flowers, he, poor soul,
found thorns;
Lone shadows drear beneath bright gleams of sunny,
pleasant light;
Now rose-bloom and white lily his thorn-brow
adorns
And sweet, eternal hours gem the arid wastes of
Night.

A PRAYER FOR TO-DAY.

O THOU, farseeing One, mighty and great!
 Give us strong men in these dark, stormy days,
 While Lust and Greed their voices, grim, upraise
 To busy throngs, that in life's market wait!
 Give us strong men, who snap their thumbs at fate;
 Men, whose pure hearts with virtue are ablaze
 To do the good that lies in open ways,
 While Poverty stands beggar at Earth's gate!

Give us strong men, with lofty, noble minds;
 Strong voices, that resound above the din
 Of strife; white souls in which to sunshine in;
 Strong hearts, wherein glad Justice ever finds
 Bright dawns of hope and cloistered aisles, so
 gray,
 Where tired Spirits love to tread for aye.

LAUGHTER AND TEARS.

O TIME! Take not away the bright laughter
 That sounds strong through the wide halls of
 Mirth!

There's an echo comes lingering after,
 The dearest and clearest on earth.

For the laugh that steals up through the city
 Over all the great tumult and din,
 Comes from children of men. 'Twere a pity
 To house such sweet, glad music in.

And the tears! Ah, they burn in their going,
 As they roll from the eyelid's dim shore,
 But they'll sometime stop, dear, in their flowing,
 Though Sorrow storms wild 'gainst life's door.

O they run down the valleys of Quiet,
 O'er the cheek's young, fresh, blossomy field—
 The oftener Grief's rain cometh nigh it,
 The more Love's red roses 'twill yield.

THE FIRST MASS.

I.

GREAT friend of God! This morn, at your first
mass—

The brightest jewel in a life's fair crown—

I knelt in peace, while pray'rs walked up and down
My soul's white corridors; I heard them pass,
Rev'rent and slow. Out on the earth's green grass,
The sunbeam-children stood; tanned shadows,
brown,

E'en journeyed from the noisy, throbbing town
To see you pass from out the church. Alas!

The earth is full of men, and yet how few
The toilers in the sinful, reeking street!

This morn, I saw in your frail, trembling hands
The Spotless One; it seemed the shadows knew.

Men bowed their heads. I heard the winds repeat:
"Another priest at Life's wide threshold
stands."

II.

I saw your mother—poor old soul—prepare
For the Communion on her bended knees;
Her mother-heart throbbing Love-ecstasies,
Her rose-lips scenting rich perfume of pray'r.
The sunlight lay upon her silvered hair,
Like your own blessing, child. Her eyes were
seas,
Wherein hope-ships were sailing in a breeze
That seemed like God's breath, stealing everywhere.

Long, long she knelt at the bright altar's throne;
Her cherished beads hung loosely in her hand.

For years and years, she'd waited for the day—
God only knew the joy that was her own.

"O Lord! I'm satisfied," she begged. "Command
Thy angels to take my poor life away!"

THE DEW'S ON THE CLOVER.

THE dew's on the clover, and, over
 Creeping dawn, a little star shines;
 The bee, gentle lover, is rover
 Deep down in the berry-red vines.
 My heart is a-thrill
 With the fill and the spill
 Of Nature's bright beauty around—
 O come then, my Sweet,
 With gladness complete,
 Let's pluck Love's white rose on the ground!

The skies that were leaden now redden,
 Like your cheeks in rich twilight shine;
 An angel, Love steals in to deaden
 The anguish of your heart and mine,
 While over us here
 Is the cheer, glad, sincere,
 That follows the song of the birds;
 And God is about
 With sentinels out,
 For young Hopes play truant in herds.

O Love! all the gladness and madness
Of music that sounds in the trees
Over this life's wild stress and sadness,
Wakes souls into deep ecstasies.
Belovèd! Thy hand
Guides me through the dark land,
So come! let's build our bright hours!
They'll be all a-gleam
With sun and star-beam,
And God will waken the flowers.

SONG IN THE NIGHT.

A BIRD'S lone call through the locust trees
Soft thrills the air, and the mountain breeze
Is rose-perfumed, and the face of Night
Is moonbeam-kissed, and fond thoughts swift light
The smould'ring fires of soul desires,
While Mem'ry knocks at my heart's door bright.

Pray, enter Sprite! let thy fingers tune
Life's idle harp to the songs of June!
Gray Mem'ry—queen—now aging fast,
Ah, are you here? Have you come at last,
From pain surcease, to bring me peace
And wake love-tales from lips of the Past?

HAUNTED.

WAKING the sleep of the Midnight,
Out from the Land of Care,
Comes a strong voice in the starshine—
O, it steals everywhere!

Hushed is the song of the cricket,
Noiseless the mild winds pass;
But the swift voice travels over
The frightened, trembling grass.

'Tis the voice that haunts the woodlands
Of man's wild, throbbing brain—
The voice of the Ghost, that shadows
Life's sky with clouds of rain.

'Tis the voice that keeps recording
Lost opportunities,
That are passed in the endeavor
To build self-monarchies.

IN NOVEMBER TIME.

TURN Thou Thine ear upon my voice, kind Lord,
While glad I bless
The little things of life—the warm caress
Of Happiness!

The cold winds knock at my closed cabin door,
The fields are drear,
And it but tells—the silent, falling tear—
That life is dear.

The night goes sobbing through the lonely waste,
But, then, I know
My heart still treads the dreamy paths aglow,
Where poppies blow.

And, for all this, my prayer steals upward now,
Life's golden May—
Her twilight hush, her rosy blush of day,
Her dusk, so gray.

I thank Thee for the shadows that shut in
Life's sun and heat!
It was Thy will. I heard Thy lips repeat,
That Pain was sweet.

And, knowing Thee, I tried my best to bear
The crosses, laid
Upon my shoulder. Strong and unafraid,
I fought and prayed.

IN THE STREETS.

PULSING life and throb of soul,
 Sound of hammer, pick and spade,
 Creaking waggons, wheels that roll
 Up and down the pavement, laid—
 'Tis the medley, charged with strife,
 Played upon the keys of life.

Marching through the crimson fight,
 Hearts that struggle with strong cares,
 Ev'ry hour, day and night,
 Men-souls, steeped in wild despairs,
 Battling arms and tired feet,
 Lips that taste life's bitter-sweet.

Now, gray Age, with weary smile—
 Now, fresh Youth, glad sunshined o'er
 With Hope's golden afterwhile,
 Grim Want, shrieking through earth's door—
 Pictures all, from life's true pen,
 Drawn amid the sobs of men.

I WONDER.

I WONDER when the little King was born
 Did Mary kiss the tiny infant hands,
 Outstretched to rich and poor in earth's wide
 lands?

I wonder did she see the smile adorn
 The two red cheeks—twin roses without thorn—
 And did she heed the baby-like commands,
 The lusty cry, making her heart's lone sands
 Music with love? No Calvarys forlorn,

In this Joy-time, her woman-soul did start,
 The while it leaned on strong, firm arms of pray'r.
 She was a mother, then, and busy Care
 Did build a Paradise within that mart
 For her, out of that lonely stable bare—
 Garden enclosed in Christ's young rose-white heart.

I WISH FOR THEE.

I WISH for thee
Those early, white, young peaceful hours,
That come down the black aisles of night,
Like silent nuns, with cheerful, bright
Thoughts fresh for flowers!

I wish thee, dear
A happy mind! That no grief gray
May haunt the quiet valleys fair,
Where God glad shepherds in His care
Thee, day by day!

I wish thee, dear,
A warm, warm heart. That Joy full sweet
May find a place to summer in,
Far from the bustle and the din
Of lowly street!

I wish thee more—
May rhapsodies of deepest bliss
Fill all thy day! May present years
Give thee a glimpse of other spheres
To twilight this!

POVERTY.

For her, no spring of hope, so fair,
 No rosy summer glad appears,
 Her eyes are filled with autumn tears—
 They see the winter—white Despair.

FELLOWSHIP.

To BE of service to our fellowmen,
 To lighten other's burdens day by day,
 To scatter kindness with love's sunny ray
 And, thus, disperse the gloom in the cold den
 Of human hearts, that feel but anguish, when
 Sweet Peace should sit therein, enthroned for aye,
 With Joy, in princely waiting, bright as May,
 That gladdens the lone heart of vale and glen—

This should be our grand endeavor. This right
 Consciousness of doing, when duty calls,
 Some little good, that opens to eyes, sad,
 Bright amaranthine vistas of delight,
 Will doubly pay us, when life's shadow falls,
 Full knowing that we lived to make hearts glad.

LINES TO A FRIEND.

Not he who whispers praises in mine ear
And shakes my hand, when Fortune lights my
way,
And offers me his heart's gold—gift most dear.
No! no! not he—(pray, lead that man away!)
But he, the man, with honest, beaming smile,
Who, at my side, in shadow or sunshine,
Steers my young boat a-down Life's glist'ning
Rhine,
My weakness marks, yet cheers me on the while,
And makes life sweeter, brighter—in the end—
'Tis he, I call by noblest name—a friend.

THE CRY OF MOTHERHOOD.

WHAT have I done that Thou shouldst pierce my
breast

With this new grief? O God of pity! Spare
This little babe—this angel! Do not tear
Life's string—'tis breaking fast—but let him rest
In my strong arms, his little heart close-pressed
To mine! O God of mercy! Hear my prayer,
Floating upon the night-wings, black and bare!
Lord! Let him live—he knows my voice the best!

Then, some day, I will teach his lips, so red,
To sing Thy praises; shouldst Thou take his life,
'Twould break my heart. 'Tis all that I possess,
This baby-love of his—all else is dead.

Ah! Thou wilt spare him, Lord? Then life's
fierce strife

Still holds for me a sweetness, I confess.

AFTER DAWN.

THE star of morn fades in the blue,
The strong sun climbs the mountain height
And shoots, through the invading dew,
Her arrow-gleams of light.

And lo! there steals a matin sweet,
From lonely pine-grove on the hill,
And, plaintively, he doth repeat
His chant—the whip-poor-will.

'Tis set in minors of despair,
Yet mingled with the sorrow strain,
There floats a tender, soothing air—
The bobolink's refrain.

Ah, it is music rich, sublime;
His dulcet notes ring in mine ear
And, on the breath of rose and thyme,
There lingers gladsome cheer.

The willows whisper to the breeze
Their fond, glad pleading to the sun,
And blossoms open in the trees
Their eyelids one by one.

AFTER PARTING.

THE wind blows cold down the dark lane to-night
And here, alone, I wonder that my heart
Should beat so wildly, for when I did part
With him, my poor, old, trembling heart felt light
And gladly hopeful. Am I thinking right?
O will he like the noisy, troubled mart
And will the city's red crimes, glaring, smart
His white, white soul, so lily-like and bright?

O God! I wonder, when the shadows fall
Will he forget to breathe the prayer I taught
His childish lips, long, long ago, when naught
But joy was mine? Nay, he will surely call
Thee, Lord, to father him, when sin-befraught,
And I will mother him with prayers—MY ALL!

TO MOTHER AT CHRISTMAS.

MOTHER! My sweet! I hear the sound of bells,
And, in mine heart, a new-born joy swift wakes
And lifts its little hands, and lo! God takes
The thoughts so glad while earth's loud organ swells.

My heart this night is full of waiting prayers,
My lips for thee with love are musical,
And life is bright, reflecting lights that all
Have come from thy pure eyes, weighed down with
cares.

I hear thy voice call through my heart's wide door,
I see thy face, by swift years aureoled;
I feel thy hands steal into mine. They hold
But love—the love that makes men rich and poor.

The moonbeams light upon thy silvered hair,
How quick the artist-years can change a face!
But thine is sweeter now, for the embrace
Of those gray locks gives thee a saintlier air.

And, whilst thou'rt here, my sweet, here at my side,
I pray that God may not let cold snows fall
Upon thy heart, but that warm springs enthrall
Thy spirit with gold sunshines, glorified!

And, through thy life, may that sweet peace abide,
The peace all feel when Yule-tide spreads its
wings,
The peace that soars above mean, earthly things
And builds us heavens, near and sanctified!

And, in the cheerful manger of thy heart,
Let me e'er dwell—a child. O mother sweet!
Thy shepherd-words will soothe the burning heat,
That oft consumes me in the city's mart.

O let me be where Christmases ne'er part!
O let me live where joy treads ever free!
O let me rest where peace waits watchfully—
In the warm manger of thy mother-heart!

IN THE CLOISTER.

SHE spends her life far from the noisy mart
 Of commerce, and deep, sunny, azure skies
 Paint all the brighter, to her autumn eyes,
 The vales of Solitude, dear to her heart!
 And there she toils unknown and bears her part
 Of Life's Gethsemane. Yet, O, the prize!
 Sweet, rose-crowned ways lead not to paradise—
 She chose the thorny ways, that pain and smart.

A mystic Hand has tuned her fond heart-strings
 To one long hymn of praise, with joy replete,
 That fills, with music, paths angels have trod
 And, from her soul, Love daily, gladly flings
 Pearls of prayer—keys that unlock, in dire need,
 The audience chamber of the very God.

LIGHT AND SHADOW.

Joy came to me in garments, snowy white,
And laid her finger on my troubled soul,
And creeping Dawn grew fresh and roseate;
Before me walked young, strong-limbed Hopes.
The whole

Earth smiled—an infant, cradled in the light
That was on land and sea. Gone was the night.

Gone was the night of restlessness and pain
And, in the glitter of the morning shine,
My heart and I walked leafy lanes grown wild,
With bright-eyed, anxious Joy as sister mine.
The sunbeam-children played with us again—
And O the Sun, that shone amid life's rain!

NIGHT ON LAKE ONTARIO.

THE night winds whisper through the leaves
Their serenades to fields a-bloom;
No stars clear light the city's gloom;
The wild lake heaves
And, sad, she throws, outstretched in prayer,
In terror wild, upon the sands,
Her foamy, ghastly, trembling hands,
In grim despair.

The lone shore feels her hissing breath;
The cool winds hear her thunders roll,
And, in her deep and awful soul,
She sings of Death.
O weary toiler on night's sea,
O cheery heart, yea, longing so,
O faithful one, with love aglow,
She calls not thee!

Her songs are orisons of rest,

For those, who stooped to kiss her face,

And died in that fierce, last embrace,

Upon her breast.

They beat no more—those hearts so brave—

The bravest of that sailor-band;

And God has blessed, with loving Hand,

Their lowly grave.

A SUMMER ROSE.

O BLOOD-RED rose,
That in the sunshine softly glows!
This morning thou art passing fair,
I feel thy breath upon the air,
And, while thou tellest matins sweet,
Up from the grasses in the street,
The crickets call to thee.

O rose a-bloom!
Thy smile lights up the garden's gloom,
While pearls of dew gleam on thy breast;
E'en on thy pillows green they rest.
They shine in sunbeam-tinted light
And glow upon thy velvet bright,
Like queenly jewels rare.

O rose blood-red!
The south winds shake thy haughty head
And toss thy garments to the sun,
As if thou wert the naughty one.

And yet, within thy tearful eyes,
They dry the dew-drops; still the sighs
That sadden all the air.

Bright rose! Dost hear
The message sweet that fills thine ear?
Dost hear the bee's love-whisperings?
His bass-toned madrigal he sings.
A paramour young, gay, he sips
The honey from your scented lips,
And steals your heart away.

THE FIRST SNOWFALL.

THE Lord came down from heaven far
In the night-time when all was still,
And the moon leaned so wearily
Upon a distant, lonely hill.

He trod the city's thoroughfares
To protect His own poor from harm;
He stooped to dry an orphan's tears—
When His white cloak slid from His arm.

MEMORY.

MEM'RY'S an album, precious and rare,
Holds, in its sweetness, life's ebbing prayer;
Dear are its pages, wrinkled and worn,
Many the fond hopes, glad, that adorn.

Sweet, o'er its pages, oft through the day,
Glad, blessèd moments I dream away;
Each leaf is sacred, each word is dear—
Many the heart-aches written down here.

Old are its pictures. Some of them glad,
Some full of color, others dull, sad—
Skies of a summer, brightened by years,
Skies of an autumn, hidden by tears.

Mem'ry's an album of the dim Past,
And its fond pages will ever last,
And, when in fancy my young heart grieves,
Thoughts bright are fingers, turning the leaves.

IN THE CATHEDRAL.

THE city's tempting voice sounds far outside
These sacred walls; a breath of tender prayer
Lingers upon the incense-laden air.
Here, hopes have dawned and bitter tears been
dried;
Despairing sinners, here, have knelt and sighed
And sued their God for mercy; hearts, laid bare
By sorrow keen, have found a shelter rare,
In these gray walls, where peace and love abide.

And, as I kneel, the moon-lit night doth steal
Softly around the cross-tipped, altar's height,
To crown the Christ's head with her gleams of
light.
And, fresh, upon my sin-stained soul, I feel
The touch of God's pure finger in the night,
And lips give vent to joys, that thoughts conceal.

A MADRIGAL.

I PRAYED for Joy.

My cheerless heart was sad and lone
And, in a tender, gentle tone,
A lark, poised in the skies afar,
Like morn's last, pale, ethereal star,
Welcomed the daylight o'er the hill—
The green earth smiled and all was still—
And Joy was mine.

I prayed for Hope.

Life's afternoon was clouded deep
And rained thick tear-drops on my cheek,
And birds sang songs across the lea—
O weary heart! they sang for thee!
And, when the sorrow-clouds were few,
God's sunshine, pure, came stealing through—
And Hope was mine.

I prayed for Love—
And Love it came, from God's white throne,
And made its presence, rare, mine own.
It tuned my heart's sad, pulseless strings
And sang for me fond whisperings
Of peace, that brightened life's glad day
With sunsets golden, twilights gray—
And Love was mine.

QUATRAIN.

SOME may prize diamonds, treasures fair,
Unto life's weary end,
And never own that jewel rare—
The heart, that's in a friend.

THE CHILDREN.

God bless the children! They are dear
To all of us; the salty tear
Stings not so much, when they are round.
Their tender feet, upon the ground,
Grow tired on the long, long way,
But God is with them in their play
And clothes them with pure thoughts each day—
The little white-souled children!

We meet them in Life's throbbing street, .
In blinding storm and burning heat,
In their deep eyes, the yesternights
Of peaceful dreams and sweet delights.
Upon their lips, the red, warm press
Of spring-berries; a tenderness
In their dear smiles of weariness—
The little white-souled children!

Their pleasant worlds are flower-blown,
Their hearts know neither ache nor moan,
For, through the hours of afternoon,
Joy sings for them a stirring rune.
God's gardens, they are far away
And, when the stars come out to play,
They sleep and dream at close of day—
The little white-souled children!

Ah, cruel Time! pray wait for them
In their short-lived Bethlehem!
The world is full of men and tears.
O leave them then these few short years!
For soon their hearts must break with pain,
Their hands must smart else toil is vain,
But O we pray that they remain,
Through life, God's white-souled children!

FACES IN THE STREET.

SITTING, sad and silent, peering down into the
crowded street,

 I hear sounds of weary feet,
 And my longing spirit craves
Just a blessing on those faces, staring down into
their graves.

With the morning's crispy clearness, in the fullness
of the strife,

 Comes the flood of human life;
 And, when might's grim shadows meet,
We still hear the clang that calls us to those faces
in the street.

Some are bright and others, staring, tell their tale
of grief and woe;

 They were happy long ago;
 Once each youthful eye did seek
For the roses sweet, that blossomed in each fair and
ruddy cheek.

Where is now the beaming brightness that encircled
once each brow?

Sorrow only lingers now,
And all hope has sadly fled
From the face, once fond and faithful, from the
heart nigh cold and dead.

Theirs has been a reckless failing—just a little day
by day—

And they halted on the way,
In life's twilight hour, most sweet.
O great God! look down, with pity, on those poor
faces in the street.

A VOICE IN THE RAIN.

I HEARD a sparrow, at my window-pane,
 Calling through the long night, so black and drear,
 Its little heart frozen and cold with fear,
Calling to me to shield it from the rain,
That deluged forest, meadow, field and lane.
 My thoughts crept out to that small thing, sincere,
 And, when I touched it, in its eye a tear
Lay diamonded—the grateful price of pain.

How often, in the busy stress of strife,
 When pleading voice sounds through the heart's
 closed door,
 Alone, amid the darkness and the pour
Of bitter, raining tears, when storm is rife,
 Unmindful of the good Love might have bore,
We coldly turn away a sunless life.

THEN AND NOW.

Do you remember that fond day,
We walked the meadows, you and I,
The wild rose clinging to our way,
No sorrow-cloud to mar the sky?

The south wind, stealing, scarcely stirred
The willow, bending down in prayer,
And, in that early hour, we heard
Love's whisper on the dewy air.

How still we stood and, turning, gazed
Into the Dawn, rich crimsoned o'er;
The jewels of the morning blazed,
Our hearts beat gladder than before.

The breeze stole lightly o'er the lea,
The birds were singing everywhere;
We listened, wrapped in ecstasy,
Our lives were young and youth was fair.

Their voices thrilled the air above
 With clear and ringing melodies;
 They sang of God's eternal love—
 Of Him who tuned life's eager keys.

Do you remember that fond day,
 The splendor of the mountain-brow?
 Red roses bright then decked our way,
 There were no thorns as there are now.

A SONG OF FALL.

THE leaves are falling off the stem,
The moaning winds are calling them;
They fly about the hazy air,
And sorrow's voice is ev'rywhere—
I hear it in the passing breeze,
I hear it in the sobbing trees.

And, far and wide, they scattered lie,
While cruel Autumn passes by,
A wand'rer in a lonely land.
The leaves, they were a happy band—
A feast of color for men's eyes.
But ah! it was but Death's disguise.

Dear, scattered leaves, in silent graves!
You are the Summer's smitten braves.
Yet, O, some day, o'er field and glen,
The robins glad will sing again;
And God's sweet whisper on the breeze,
Will call you back—home to the trees.

WIEGEN-LIED.

THE gold is thick upon the fields,
 The dew is on the heather;
 Come to my heart, my little one!
 In fairyland together,
 Let's sail the bays and walk the ways,
 Aglow with red, red roses!
 Frail night is here and she, in fear,
 The day's bright portal closes.

The little cheek is hot and red,
 Soft pillowed in dark tresses;
 Two anxious lips are tuning slow
 The prayer that always blesses—
 The trials small, that often fall
 Down with the brightest sunbeams—
 The shadows gray, that scare away
 The loveliest of day dreams.

So hushaby, little one! hushaby dear!
Thy young lips are sighing, the moments are flying;
The murmurous winds in the valleys are crying—
 But they cannot get thee,
 So pray, do not fret thee!
O rush them by! brush them by, little one, dear!
Mother is watching—the cradle is near
To hushaby, lullaby thee to thy sleep,
While two little, blue little eyes take a peep.

A FADED LETTER.

UPON a letter old I came to-day.

'Twas faded much, yet it was worth the prize,
And, when I read it, tears crept to my eyes;
Like drops of dew on blushing rose, they lay
Upon my cheek and, when they rolled away,
I saw you, gentle, loving, brave and wise,
Your lips the color of the crimson skies—
And we were boys, friends of life's tender May,

But now the scene has changed and we are men.

In lonely walls, a cassocked priest, you pray,
Giving your life to God through ev'ry day,
Fighting grim vice with fiery voice and pen.

You left me at the parting of the way
And sacrificed the world and all its ken.

NOCTURNE.

NIGHT! O the heart of her, throbbing in glee,
Silent, the robin's stir in the birch-tree—
Soft glows her angel-star, brilliant, serene.
Night—and the face of her, smiling—a queen!

Queen of the Slumber Sea, wondrous and fair!
I love thy minstrelsy, stealing and rare—
Breeze of the love-tone lilt, singing of spring,
Serenades glad repeat, leaves whispering.

Queen! and the sight of her, dazzling and fair,
Rich, robed in gossamer; trailing, her hair
Kiss the pale moonbeams' light, sinking to rest—
O for the jewel-bright stars on her breast!

Night! and the dreams of peace, lighting her eyes,
Bring us sleep to release care's weary sighs;
Mountain and meadow far smile in their green.
Night—and the face of her, glowing—a queen!

A SONG OF THE END.

A CEASELESS striving on the way,
A love-crowned longing day by day,
A burst of laughter, set in tears,
The mem'ry of a few short years;
A gleam of sunshine, in the morn,
To cheer the weary heart, forlorn,
A shade of sorrow, in between,
To cloud the brow of Hope, serene;
A birth, bright as the buds of May,
A grave, a dear one laid away—
The many heartaches in the strife,
A smile—a tear—and this is life.

But life is more. The love of God
Lights sweet, with hope, the path we trod
And, though dark shadows deep may frown
Around life's cross—they hide the crown.

AT SIX O'CLOCK.

THE city shrieks, 'neath sound of brazen bell
And voice of whistles loud, that wildly ring,
Yet O what dreams of peace and rest they bring,
O what a tale to careworn hearts they tell!
Their work is done and, now, long streets they swell,
The sons, so worn, that to the workshop cling—
Age, white with years, and youth worship the
King
Of Toil—enthroned in hearts, that know him well.

Father of heaven! thy sweet mercy shed
Upon this throbbing vein of human strife!
O bless these tired souls, that feel the weight
Of battle! Yea, their hearts have often bled.
Down in those ranks are hidden gems of life—
Pearls of good character, prized oft, too late.

TRANSFORMATION.

At dawn, I gazed into an opening rose,
 Its pure, young soul was steeped in pearly dew;
 At dusk, again, my sinking heart drew near,
 When lo! there flowered Love's white thoughts
 of you.

THE LAMENT OF AUTUMN.

I AM lonely, O so lonely!
 Give me peace! O give me only
 One bright flower-smile to cheer me!
 A lone widow, I am calling,
 Calling for the dreamy faces
 In these old, familiar places—
 In the twilight—calling—calling,
 While the dry, dead leaves are falling.
 White-haired mem'ry pray, stand near me,
 All my loves are gone! O cheer me,
 Heaven knows the tears I give thee!
 I am lonely, O so lonely!

ROSES MORTES.

ACROSS the dusk a shadow slowly steals,
The time is filled with dreamless sanctity,
And, in my soul, burn glowing thoughts of thee,
While my young heart suffers and gladly feels
The joy, the ecstasy, that Love conceals
In these dead roses, red and velvety.
E'en now the perfume of a Memory
Rises from these poor leaves and swift appeals.

And now the hour, with joy all consecrate,
Lights up the path of roses in the sun,
Where, young and fair, you stood the brightest
one,
Lifting the latch to your heart's golden gate,
That I might enter, worshipper for aye,
To feel the dawning of Love's perfect day.



—“the path of roses in the sun
Where, young and fair, you stood the brightest one,”

THE SOUL OF EASTERTIME.

THE crystal morn flings wide her gates
 And lo! the Easter light appears;
 The doves are cooing to their mates,
 While sunbeams stride across the meres,
 And, on the hills, a glory shines—
 Yellow, crimson, saffron and gold;
 Beyond the rugged, tap'ring pines,
 The fingers of the Hours, old,
 Are weaving on the earth's bright loom
 The vestments for the morning mass,
 And, in the disappearing gloom,
 The shadows, like veiled nuns, slow pass.

The soft voice of the limpid stream
 Weds music to its murmuring,
 And Spring trips lightly through the gleam
 And, in the trees, the birds glad sing.
 The lilies white on warm leaves rest,
 Like new-born babes on throbbing breasts—
 Those little souls so still and blest!
 O grant that, through all life's behests,

Before men's wild, despairing eyes,
They oft will blossom rich with hopes!
The lily's face turns to the skies,
She always seeks the sunny slopes.

The joyous Eastertime! How grand
The melodies of her pure heart!
"Rise out!" she sings, "and boldly stand,
Erect and strong upon life's mart!
Rise out of your old selves this day,
And build more lasting parapets,
Where, resting, you may scan the way
That leads to purer living! Threats
Of time avail not! In one breath,
Life's sunset fades. Let not the night
O'erwhelm you with her errant—Death,
And find you starving on life's height!"

THE LAND OF DREAMS.

IN drowsy night, long after the lone day
Has folded up its silent, crimson wings
In seas of gold, I hear the whisperings
Of some sweet voice, that lures my thoughts away
Into a land, blushing with rose of May,
Where Joy, enthroned, tunes her harp's silver
strings
To rhapsodies, which far and wide she flings,
While sad-faced Mem'ry kneels adown to pray.

Dear land of dreams! 'Tis God that lights thy face
With the pure sunshine of the years gone by;
And in thy smile a radiance fairly beams,
While to Sleep's pris'ner, in thy fond embrace,
Youth's voices glad, and Love's sweet, tender sigh
Recall, so bright, Life's morning's faded gleams.

WOULD YOU?

WERE I a rose in garden fair
 And you, dear, softly passing there,
 Would you stoop low to see my face
 Sweet pillowed in the leaves' embrace—
 Would you?

And if, perchance, the drops of dew
 Would hide it from your tender view,
 Would you, dear, passing by that day,
 Wipe all my lonely tears away—
 Would you?

And, whisp'ring gladly in my ear,
 A love-inspired word of cheer,
 A beggar in Love's garden there,
 Would you, dear, listen to my prayer—
 Would you?

And, with a bright light in your eyes,
 As radiant, as the dawn's flushed skies,

Would you take me to your warm breast
That I might feel Love's calm and rest—
Would you?

And, folded there for some long while,
With red cheeks, warmed, dear, by thy smile,
Would you bend low again to hear
Something sweet, I would tell thee, dear—
Would you?

Or, in my little garden, there,
My breath upon the throbbing air,
Would you, dear, pass me idly by—
Alone, unloved, have me to die—
Would you?

LINES TO A POET.*

(Upon the death of his son.)

THE hours pass along their narrow spheres;
 The days creep slow into the bed of night;
 The months reflect rich argosies, love-bright;
 Yet Sorrow comes and brings thee precious tears
 To lay upon a mother-heart, the meres
 Of which will ever miss songs of delight,
 Springing from one bird-voice, sweet, exquisite—
 Music, none richer ever filled Love's ears.

Dear child! God called him to His gardens fair,
 Whilst yet his soul was white as when he came;
 He called him by his own endearing name
 To blossom with the flowers in His care.
 Weep not! A lily rears its head above—
 Take up the cross! God did it all through Love.

*Dr. William Henry Drummond.

LIFE'S SUBLIMEST HEIGHT.

THERE are hearts, I ween, who in sadness lean
On the arm of some wild despair;
THERE are flow'rs that bloom in the midnight gloom,
And yet all their beauty is there.

THOUGH cold be the days, there are sunny rays
To quicken the dull lives of men,
And hearts, that sorrow in glad to-morrow,
Will brighten up swiftly again.

FOR Pain is the test to bring out the best
That's in us; the trembling soul's sheaf
Glow's bright in its light. Life's sublimest height
Is seen in the maelstroms of Grief.

THE OLD YEAR IS NO MORE.

THE old year is no more. Her dear, sweet face
 Is wreathed in sadness; in her soft gray hair
 The frost-jewels glitter and, in silent prayer,
 The willows, o'er the midnight burial-place,
 Now fold their thin, wan hands, while moonbeams
 trace

Their shadows on the cross of snow, so rare,
 That lone earth rears above Time's angel fair—
 The dead, dead Bride of winter's love-embrace.

And while the pæans ring the New Year in—
 A happy child, her piercing, anxious eyes
 Hiding all future hopes, sorrows and tears—
 Creator! Lord! forgive the awful sin
 That stains our past, and let our thoughts arise
 To nobler actions through life's coming years!

A SONG OF CHEER.

BLEST is the night and glad the time!
The lordly Yule-tide moon appears;
And now, into mine longing ears,
The joy-bells chime.

What soft, gray hopes of long ago
Those chimes recall—what silent bliss!
My heart now flowers in the kiss
Of winter's snow.

The world is kind—the world is old.
Each heart builds its own resting place
Out of life's deeds. Youth's angel face
So soon turns cold.

But Christmas brings, while time swift flows,
A tenderness for every grief;
The thorn lies covered by the leaf
Of Hope's red rose.

Fling wide the portals then, poor heart;
Let melodies of Peace awake
The sleeping dreams for love's sweet sake,
While shadows part!

AFTER RAIN.

THE green, green bough is overhead,
The blue, blue sky is wide;
The gray clouds, sleepy, drift to bed,
While frightened thoughts swift glide
Adown the shining, starry path.
The storm has spent his awful wrath—
Peace, solitude abide.

Within my heart, now, is a rest,
So sweet and pure and grand;
No gloomy shadows weary nest
Upon its tear-swept land.
Grief's storm is o'er, my heart's great fear
Lies dead, his demon-eyes bright, clear,
And closed his bony hand.

IN THE SLUMS.

FATHER of Heav'n! Oh, take into Thy care
These poor, sick children of the reeking street,
And soothe their little, bruised and burning feet!
Children of circumstance! They mutely bear
The frost and wet of storm, and gladly share
The warmth of golden sunshine, while they meet
The trooping, young hopes with their clear eyes
sweet
Upon the fields, where Life toils on in prayer.

They are Thy children—Mighty King of men!
So let Thy love light up their early days,
And with Thy arms set Thou their feet aright,
Upon the broad, white path of peace! O then
Their lives will blossom forth in various ways,
And Day will dawn to cheer each aching Night.

O HEART OF MINE.

O HEART of mine!

I think of thee as always young;
I hear thee knocking at my breast—
But O dear heart, for thee, no rest,
Until life's tender song is sung.
God holds the key and He knows best,
Poor heart of mine!

O heart of mine!

I fain would grant thee dreams of peace;
Thy prison walls are dark, I know.
I hear thee walking to and fro,
Like some chained captive, ill at ease—
But then, alas! it must be so,
Poor heart of mine!

EVENTIDE.

FAR o'er the fields, rich in their em'rald gleam,
Where whisp'ring run the merry rills so free,
The meadow-lark sounds clear her melody,
And sunbeams, fading, throw their smiles supreme.
The lily pale has laid her head to dream
Upon the brook's green breast and, o'er the lea,
In notes of prayer, soft, pealing, glad and free,
The Ang'lus, ringing, sings its ev'ning theme.

O little bell! From out yon belfry gray,
Thy accents, stealing, linger soft and sweet;
Hushed are the noises in the village street,
Whilst now you echo out the parting day—
The ploughman hears thy call and doth repeat
His thanks to God, while bending low to pray.

A SONG OF OTHER DAYS.

HERE'S a song for the times, the soft flowing rhymes,
A song for those moments of brightness,
When the trill of a bird in springtime was heard
To cheer with its silvery lightness;
When sunbeams in glee gaily smiled upon me
And stirred my young voice in its laughter—
O thrice happy times! You are gone, yet betimes
Your music comes lingering after.

Long years now are gone. I sit dreaming alone,
Hedged in by the cares that surround me,
And, longing, I sigh for the days glided by,
That once shed their blessings around me.
O for the joy-song that stole peaceful along
And filled the night air with its feeling!
O'er faint, misty years, through a vista of tears,
Sweet voices now sadly come stealing.

And faces once youthful, eyes ever truthful
Beam brightly, serenely as ever;
Time may change many things while mellow voice
rings,
Yet friendship it never can sever.
Old friends are longing, as mem'ries come thronging,
To count o'er those moments of gladness,
While noise and rustle of city's loud bustle
Dole daily their dull song of sadness.

THE DESERTED SCHOOLHOUSE.

AGAIN, I stood—the summer sky was fair—
Before the old school, on the grass-grown street;
The willows green were bending in the heat
And shook their heads, sad, drooping in despair.
The sparrows sat and nodded on the stair,
I listened for the sound of anxious feet
And longed, once more, loved faces dear to
greet—
I called in vain, for Silence, queen, reigned there.

Then, in a dream, I saw the school again—
The rosy morn fell bright upon her face—
And, through the Past, there stole sweet
Mem'ry's call,
I heard glad shouts and laughter fill the plain;
The gray-haired master stood in his old place,
I saw my youth—God's smile upon it all!

THE COMFORTER.

I KNOW not how, I know not when
Death's fingers shall unlock the gate
That holds thee prisoner, heart of mine,—
Come that dread hour soon or late.

But this I know. God strength will give
To thee, poor heart, and cheer the way,
And comfort bring and hope secure
When Night shall flower into Day.

THE ISLES OF SORROW.

SOMEWHERE they lie beneath the purple skies.

Poor heart! full often, in their lonely woods,
A hermit thou hast been, where sadness broods
On beast and bird and flow'r; where tall oaks rise
And spread their hands, in supplication, wise,
And pines bend low, like monks with darkish
hoods.

And thou, dear heart, victim of many moods,
Wand'rest down the wide path of sobs and sighs.

The Isles of Sorrow! He, who's felt their sting
Of bitterness, has first sailed life's blue seas,
The breezes playing lute-like melodies,
When suddenly a finger snaps the string
Of joy and hurls him praying to the sod,
In lonely fields, beneath the eyes of God.

DECEMBER.

THE wise men said: "A Child would soon be born
And that His baby-feet would feel the cold.
No soft, warm garments would His crib adorn
But straw, gathered by shepherds in the wold."

December gray felt sad, and in her heart
Throbbled a strong pity for the little Child.
Through long, dark nights her hands in love toiled
smart—
She wove Him a white blanket, undefiled.

A SUMMER MORNING.

THE sprite of Dawn has spread its silver wings
And, lo, a smile steals o'er the Day's lone face
And dries the tears of dew—the sorrow-trace—
With gleams of joy and sunny glistenings.
Glad, from her harp, the meadow-lark now flings
Her chords of serenade and gray clouds grace
The blue sky with their sunbeam-tinted lace,
While, over field and fen, morn's medley rings.

Ah, voices, tuned in matin-minstrelsy,
I love your echoes' stealing, glad refrain!
The hunter scales the mountain height again
And, on the breath of roses, fresh and free,
His sweet song, tender, dies far down the plain
And one true heart throbs back Love's melody.

NOCTURNE.

O'ER the lone city night winds are sighing;
 Quickly, O quickly the hours are dying.
 Bright glows the angel-star, through heaven's azure
 bar,

 While, o'er the past afar,
 Glad thoughts are flying.

In the white starlight shadows are creeping;
 In the green meadows daisies are sleeping.
 Laden with precious tears, thy face, dear one,
 appears,

 Through the sepulchral years,
 Safe in love's keeping.

Face of my childhood, tender and beaming!
 See how the pure smiles gently are streaming
 From the blue, sunny eye, bright as the opal sky—

 O what a picture
 I saw in my dreaming!

INVOCATION.

SHOW me the way, that Thou wouldst have me go,
 While wand'ring down Life's darkened path of
 years,

And give me strength to fight the bitter fears,
 That strive to bring about my overthrow!

I ask not much, dear Lord. Full well I know,
 That there is joy in life to dry my tears,
 That lips are kind to whisper in my ears
 And tune my heartstrings to love's allegro.

Show me the way, kind Father! Let me see
 A little sunlight in my ev'ry day

And, for my wealth, give me not lucre gay
 But peace of soul and mind! Therein, for me,

Lies recompense, the sweetest, to defray
 Man's sense of duty, love-defined and free.

THE CITY'S POOR.

THE wintry winds are blowing through the willows
 in the street,
 And, up the snowy pavement, comes the tramp of
 weary feet.

O footsteps of the homeless, sounding far into the
 night!

The stars, in the blue heavens, clear, are list'ning
 with delight.

O hearts with hunger breaking for the sound of a
 kind voice!

Hark! hark! the winds are calling:

"Love is near—poor ones rejoice!"

O eyes tear-stained and longing for the smile on
 some bright face!

O lips in pray'r glad moving in yon dismal market-
 place!

O souls in love now yearning for that peace,
 eternal rest,

High o'er you there is watching, from the dear
 home of the blest,

A mighty King and Father, standing at night's
 jeweled door,

His eyes a-flame with pity

As He watches o'er HIS poor.

APRIL.

So WORN and distracted, a princess, she mourns
For the death of her March-love, while rosy dawn
glows,
And, with blossoms bright, she his lone grave adorns,
Kneeling there, while the rain of her tears sadly
flows.

THE HAPPY MOTHER.

Two small, bright eyes, two little hands, two feet,
A voice that croons so lustily—
These were the gifts, flung from God's pure white
hand,
That made her crown of Motherhood complete.

Outside the walls of that lone stable, drear,
The lambkins watched so drearily;
The shepherd's prayer stole o'er the empty wold:
"Be still, sad heart, yon Babe will quell thy fear."

The moon passed by, so silently and slow,
He bowed his head so wearily
To catch the music of that lullaby,
So sweet it was and he was loath to go.

The stars stole in and kissed that little face,
The winds sang, O so cheerily;
A mother-heart was filled with ecstasy—
It built its heaven in that lowly place.

And Mary took the op'ning rose so still
To her warm breast glad, tenderly;
Love was too sweet—she did not feel the thorn,
So soon to sting her heart on Calv'ry's hill.

AT NOON.

LIFE'S fevered pulses throb in the wide street,
 The hours rest on the warm breast of noon,
 And breezes stop to hear young nature's croon,
 Amid the noise of shuffling, busy feet!
 And, high above, the strong-voiced bells repeat:
 "Ah! life is glad and life is sad! too soon
 The roses die, and the clear, yellow moon
 Shows us the nights of bitterness—defeat."

This life is but a round of busy cares
 And, when our years are must'ring near noon's
 gate,
 A voice cries loud in tones, both strange and great:
 "Tread on! beyond the Day's bright thoroughfares,
 Are cold, cold nights; Life's rosy morns, in pairs,
 Leave them behind! 'tis now too late—too late!"

LEGACIES.

THE Old Year paused at my cabin door wide,
One night when the wind swept the white, cold
land;

His hair was tangled and, in his warm hand,
He clasped a treasure-box, golden inside.

Sad were his eyes, O and sadder his face,
Gone was the light from his fatherly eyes;
Star, moon and cloud, in their own dazzling skies,
Waited and wondered what had taken place.

Weary and footsore, he paused in the night,
Weary his voice, O and weary his brain.
In his old true heart the feel of a pain
That dispelled pure joys, like birds in a flight.

Then from his lips burst sweet words, music-bright:
"Roses must die, else the summer remains
To woo them with love; birds hush their refrains,
For earth must sleep 'neath her blankets of white."

"I, too, am going to seek my repose
In valleys, that lie beyond the dark hills;
There to forget all my troubles and ills—
I too must go like the glowing, red rose."

"Twas a death-song filling my lonely heart,
With strange thoughts, anxious; O must my love
go—
This dear Old Year, whom I always loved so?
Life's joys are brief. Ah! they come but to part.

"Roses must die!"—thus he sang in the night:
"I am so tired, the way it is long.
Ah! I grow weak and strange fancies now
throng—
My senses are numb, my head it is light."

"Take these fond treasures, my child, they are
thine!"
Spoke he then strangely to me at the door.
"They make thee so rich, but leave me so poor,
Ah! my brain reels as if drunken with wine."

"Twas but a moment, and then he was gone.
Had I been dreaming? Ah, no, list the shrill
Cry of deep anguish come over the hill—
Some one is dying out there all alone.

“Take these fond treasures, my child!” this he
said—

“Rich golden Memories, crosses of Pain,
Tear-diamonds, jeweled Thoughts, Deeds set in
pearls”—

Ah! I have legacies left by the *dead*.

